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Lead, Kindly Light



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LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT



Lead, Kindly Light, amid th' encircling gloom,
 Lead thou me on;
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
 Lead thou me on.
Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene: one step enough for me.



I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou
 Shouldst lead me on;
I loved to choose and see my path; but now,
 Lead thou me on.
I loved the garish day; and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will; remember not past years.



So long thy power hath blest me, sure it still
 Will lead me on,
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
 The night is gone;
And with the morn those angel faces smile,
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

—*John Henry Newman.*

Lead, Kindly Light

An Exposition

By

Joseph Fort Newton

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THE MURRAY PRESS
Boston

PR 5107
.LSN4

TO
THOMAS HOUSTON MACBRIDE

*A FELLOW-FOLLOWER
OF THE KINDLY
LIGHT*

\$0.25

DEC -7 1914

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THE MURRAY PRESS

No. 1.

PRELUDE

This is a little book of the faith that sings in the heart when life is new, before the evil days come when we shall say we have no pleasure in them. It makes plea, with every art at its command, for the keeping of that unbought grace of soul which is the charm of youth, and should be the trophy of age; pointing out, the while, that all high and true living leads to Christ, as of old all roads led to Rome. It holds that our life, to be of epic worth and beauty, must be lived in view of the eternal, and with a sense of wonder and awe, expecting that at

"The next white corner of the road
My eyes shall look on Him."

To-day, even more than when Emerson wrote, "things are in the saddle and ride mankind." Who can tell whither we are riding, to what purpose, and what melody men carry in their hearts "through dusty lane and wrangling mart?" A time like this is full of nameless hope, but full of peril also. Men are confused, troubled, and strangely alone. Anything is possible. Forms of faith are changing, and if many have grown indifferent, many others are waiting, as Einar said to *Brand*, till "the great new words be found." Sometimes, in

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

rare moments, those greater words almost leap into speech, but not yet have our lips learned to fashion their music. Yet the signs bespeak the release of a spirit that shall soon find its way, even into the market place, and bring this hurrying age under the spell of a mighty and compelling faith.

Meanwhile, as for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone. We, whose days are but a span, cannot wait until thinkers have found a way of blending the old Idealism, which was too static, with the new Pragmatism, which is too fluid to afford us any fixed point on which to rest our minds. Meanwhile, one thing we do know, yea, two things are certain—that God and the Soul exist:

“Ask thy lone soul what laws are plain to thee—
Thee, and no other—stand or fall by them!
That is the part for thee!”

It matters little that we cannot write a *Hamlet*, or add a new star to the sky of thought, if only we can rule our own souls and shape them to a beauty more than temporal; that so we may bring to the Gate in the Mist something too noble to die.

This at least is clear: he who goes in chase of *The Blue Bird* of happiness will not catch it. Happiness comes by the way or never at all. “Happy, my brother?” ex-

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

claims Carlyle. "First of all, what difference is it whether thou art happy or not? To-day becomes yesterday so fast; all to-morrows become yesterdays; and then there is no question whatever of the happiness, but quite another question." Nor has the fact of the matter ever been better stated than in these words, now to be read in an open marble book on top of a modest slab marking the grave of Meredith:

"Life is but a little holding,
Lent to do a mighty labor."

We know now, from his *Letters*, what a sad life Meredith lived. Death, and things worse than death, pursued him. He did not win fame till fullness of years had made him indifferent to it, till he was alone and could not share it, till he was wise and did not need it. None the less, at eighty the birds were still singing in his heart, and he knew not "the set grey life and its apathetic end." That is success—to have kept the vision and the dream, and feel the stir of youth in the wrinkles of age; sweet of heart and full of hope; in the hand a sword for evil, in the soul a bit of a song—glad to live, but not afraid to die:

"Into the breast that gives the rose,
Shall I with shuddering fall?"

Wise men know that money does not bring peace, that realized ambitions do not

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

give content, and that success of the ordinary kind, if taken as an end in itself, is not worth striving for. To love the Truth, to seek the Ideal, to keep the wings by which we are lifted above the flats towards the hills whence cometh our strength, and, above all, to give ourselves to Him whose life is the light of men, and whose Way is "the road of the loving heart"—these are the things that matter most. One of the lessons learned by living is that there is no peace of heart, and no enduring joy, until our wills are in key with the will of the Master of the world, "in whose great hand we stand." Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but man is homeless until he rests in the Eternal.

At last, there seems to fulfill itself for every man that adage of Goethe which, when we first come upon it, appears a mere paradox: "Of that which a man desires in youth, of that he shall have in age as much as he will." Real success, then, would seem to lie, not so much in achieving what we aim at, as in aiming at what we ought to achieve, and striving for it, sure of reaching it, if not here, then hereafter. If only youth would take heed, and let its first care be for that good part which cannot be taken away, and which not even the rust of time can destroy, the eventide would be aglow with the light of a Morn beyond our mornings.

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

Hence this little book, with its defense of the validity of the Moral Ideal, and its plea for a more eager aspiring for the more than we are and the better that we ought to be. The older one grows the more one judges his own life, and that of his fellows, by the note of bird-song in it. When a man thinks of our mortal lot—its light and shadow, its faith and doubt, its joy and woe—there comes over him a strange warming of the heart toward those who walk with him along the way; especially the young. And if he can bring to bear upon our common path some light of Faith, some glint of the Ideal, and the hush of a great Hope, he has not lived in vain.

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

No doubt it is useless to protest that *Lead, Kindly Light*, so beloved by all pilgrim souls, is not a song of the eventide. Time and usage have made it such, but that is to miss its meaning, if not to mar its music. Death is the one discipline of the soul that is absent from its lines. No, this is the hymn of a young man entering upon a half-century of activity and conflict, not the sigh of one around whom the twilights of age have begun to fall. A prayer for light when life is new, it closes with the hope that, after the grey waste of moor and fen, and the peril of crag and torrent, we may once more see the morning faces smile.

The history of the hymn is familiar, but it may be recalled. On December 2nd, 1832, John Henry Newman preached his sermon on *Wilfulness* at Oxford, and the next day he left with Hurrell Froude and his father for a cruise in the Mediterranean. They spent Easter in Rome, and the Froudes, returning to England, left Newman to pursue his journey to Sicily alone. He reached Sicily, but was smitten with a fever, which came near costing him his life. On his way back—lonely, ill, and far from home—he was be-

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

calmed for weeks in the Bay of Palermo, and spent his time writing verses. Among them was this hymn, dated "At Sea, June 16th, 1833," and first published in February, 1834, entitled *Faith*. In the *Lyra Apostolica* it was headed, *Unto the Godly There Ariseth a Light in Darkness*; and in his book of verses, 1853, *Grace of Congruity*. Finally, in the edition of the same book for 1868 it was called, *The Pillar of the Cloud*. The lines, of which Newman made so little, were strangely prophetic of his career as a thinker; but did that pilgrim soul ever find rest on earth?

When asked about the hymn, years later, Newman did not recall its closing couplet, and he was sure that its wide appeal was due rather to the haunting melody of the Dykes tune. He might have replied, as Tennyson did, by quoting the words of Goethe when he was asked the meaning of one of his early poems: "You probably know better than I do, *being young*." An old man could hardly know the pathos of this cry for Light as Newman felt it at the age of thirty-two. At that age, when the glow of youth has begun to fade, and before he has learned to find his way in the Land of the Spirit, a man is strangely baffled and alone. For the moment life shows its nether side, one sees the dimness of the road, its difficulty, its dullness, its danger, and even the wisest knows that without a Guide he

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

will lose his way and miss the goal. Hence this song of the Guided life, gathering up into a few flashing phrases long stretches of the human journey.

I

One who loves darkness rather than light, for whatever reason, cannot sing this hymn. Its beauty lies in its love of the light, and in its faith that the ray of white light falling from afar into our dark human world, is kindly. Howbeit, one detects in almost every line traces of those subtle rebellions, those secret chafings which we who love to choose our way feel against any kind of leadership, however gentle and wise. Much as we need guidance in this dimly lighted world, there is that in us which dreads it, lest it lead us where we fear to go. After many wanderings we learn that there is no sorrow so complete as that of having our own way, and he is wise who prays to be released from a pride of will which has in it so much pain. The day on which a man gives up his half dread and half desire and follows the light which is Light indeed, is ever a day of peace. Other peace there is none, as Dante learned long ago. And life will teach us, if we attend to it, that the Light is no less Kindly though it lead us over the wind-swept, grave-dotted moor.

The "encircling gloom" is not the shadow

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

of sorrow, or of fear, or even of death, but the inevitable gloom which attaches to all mortal life whatsoever—the gloom of a twilight world, which will not pass till the night of life is gone, which never lets us see well beyond a step, and which makes our guidance that of faith, not of sight. It comes early, and it stays late. Our thinking is done, not in sunlight and clear shining, but in “the infinite liberty of the shadow.” There may come rifts in the cloud, but they soon close, leaving the greatest thinker to walk a dim path. Still, for every solitary pilgrim there is light enough, if he will follow it; not all light, not the perfect day, not even the dawn, but light enough to reach the far off home. Our prayer should be to be led amid the gloom, not out of it; for we cannot escape it until we pass “out of phantoms into realities,” which Newman made his motto. Once persuaded that the Light is Kindly, we may go forward with confidence, singing a song in the night.

Since we live in a beshadowed world, where the next step is often hidden, it were idle to ask to see the distant scene. Of old the wise man said that “wisdom is before him that hath understanding; but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.” The man who goes farthest, said Cromwell, is the man who does not know where he is going, and he alone knows the surprises of the way. To-day

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

is the distant scene of former years, and it is neither grimly terrible nor wildly romantic. Having lived through a part of the future, we ought to know better than to mar it by futile forebodings or vain hopes. What we picture as a scene of crowned achievement, may turn out to be a scene of weakness and failure, or only a day like to-day. Ever the road lies at our feet, and the Light has no kindlier ministry than when it leads us into taking, contentedly, one step more as long as we live.

Little do we know of the longing of men to be able to say, "I was not ever thus." Just the fact that we are ever thus: ever stumbling over nearby duties in quest of some future mirage; wayward, wilful, with the sins of years ago still rampant—that is the tragedy! Who does not hear the sigh of relief, of liberty, in the words, "*But now*, lead Thou me on." It is the joy of one who has discovered, almost suddenly, the sweetness of the guided life. Hence his appeal to the forgetfulness of God—"remember not past years"—a feeling that, while striving to plan his own life, he had missed the meaning of what life is. It is not so much the memory of flagrant deeds, as the pervasive thought of a wrong attitude, and of wasted years. Yet memory, while it may reproach us, is also a mirror in which we may see the foot-steps of the Revealer. Even in his pride and wilful-

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

ness he had been led, as Jacob awoke to realize that God had stood beside his stony bed, though he knew it not. Thus memory comes to the aid of faith:

“So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on.”

These lines should be read in the light of his sermon on *Christ Manifested in Remembrance*, and a more exquisite sermon one could hardly imagine. Shadows fall, and we do not see their meaning; we see nothing. But afterwards, like Jacob—a favorite character with Newman—we kneel and pray where once we had slept. In the Watts painting of *Love and Death* there is only one ray of light falling on the scene; and that is on the back of Death, where Love can only see it when Death has passed. It is in the afterglow that we see why, whither, and by Whom we have been led.

With this assurance, one may meet the dismal stretches of moor and fen, where the sky is as grey as a tired face, knowing that He who in other days led us in ways we knew not of, will lead us on. There is much to be learned on the moor, and withal a subdued beauty not seen elsewhere, as Hardy taught us in his study of Egdon Heath. But Hardy, like Emily Bronte, let the greyness of the moor get into his soul and subdue it. Not so Meredith, who kept a brave and sunny faith,

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

despite thick shadows, having "learned to live much in the spirit and see the brightness on the other side of life." Ay, there is the secret, if we can find it, whereby a man may journey amid the "encircling gloom" and not lose his way. Whether in the "garish day," with its showy vanity and tinsel glitter, or in the places of peril where we must pick our path "o'er crag and torrent"—we have always the Kindly Light to lead us.

"In the wilds of life astray,
Held far from our delight,
Following the cloud by day,
And the fire by night,
Came we a desert way.
O Lord, with apples feed us,
With flagons stay!
By Thy still waters lead us!"

II

What is the Kindly Light by which we are led in the dim country of this world? For Newman, as we know from the poems and sermons of those pilgrim years, the beacon of life, of faith, of hope, was the light of the Moral Ideal. For him the moral sense was no uncertain human taper flickering in the gloom; it was the light of God in the soul of man. This it was that saved him from atheism, as he confessed; and this it was that men saw in him, and which, though not understanding, they followed. Of that Inward Ray, shining to guide us amid the dark confusions of time,

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

few may ever hope to write as he has written. Here his insight was clear and true—heightened, as was natural, by a genius for the Unseen to which the stars themselves were little more than phantom lights, visionary flashings of that mighty dream, woven between God and the soul, which we agree to call the visible world. This is that light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world; the light of conscience—a light greater than all lights that may be lit by priest or philosopher, as the sun is greater than a candle.

No fact about our sordid human nature is more eloquent than its instinct for the ideal, its sense “of a dim splendor ever on before,” of a beauty ever about to be attained, of a victory ever about to be realized—that inscrutable urge whereby

“Upon our heels a fresh perfection treads,
Born of us, yet fated to excel us.”

Often man seems to be little more than animal, but when we see him leave his warm fireside and go through hardship, danger, and even death in behalf of a filmy, intangible ideal, we know that he is a citizen, by anticipation at least, of another kingdom. The fact that he will give his life, if need be, for a mere wisp of dreams, shows that there is that in him which will not, cannot, die. Indeed, the quest after high ideals is at once the central reason for life and the best proof of immor-

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

tality. This pursuit once abandoned, life need not run along any farther; the pitcher is broken at the fountain. He who has not this sense of the ideal, as truly as he that lacks charity, may be accounted as one dead.

Why this quest, and what does it reveal? For one thing, our first proof of God is in the vision of His face as we see it in the light of the Moral Ideal: as "a victorious moral will, marching in the radiance of the ideal, is the final witness." Is that vision a reality or an illusion? Here is the root of the issue as between atheist and theist—not in logic, not in fact, but in an inner attitude toward the ideal. Denial of God, when it is real, begins as a distrust or betrayal of the moral ideal in the soul, before it takes the form of a dogma. More often it is not a conscious mental process, but the fading of an inner light, or else a giving way to "those blind thoughts we know not nor can name,"—when, indeed, it is not the shadow of sin hiding the stars. How critical, then, is that hour, whether it come in the early morning, or, as with Dante, "mid-way in this mortal life," when we begin to doubt or deny the ideal. For if the light that is in us be darkness, how great is that darkness! In the vision of God, new every morning and fresh every evening, lies our only hope amid "that shadow that keeps the key to all the creeds."

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

Two attitudes toward the Ideal are open to us, between which every man must, and in fact does, make his choice for good or ill. There are those who divide humanity into two classes, the Sancho Panzas who have a sense of reality, but no ideals, and the Don Quixotes who have ideals, but no sense. By this expedient, we are told, facts may be recognized as facts and ideals as ideals—forgetting that the Ideal is the master fact of mortal life. In this view, held by many who do not confess it, our ideals, however lovely and alluring, are only the glamour cast over rude reality by a too fervid fancy; glimpses of an unreal beauty that falls on us from Fairyland; the desire of a moth for the star. So far as they have any value it is that they lure us beyond truth, in order that we may arrive at truth. Following their delusive light, we enter a region where dwell all the glad, fair, bright things whereof we are wont to dream; but only for a brief time. At last we must come back to the bitter, old and haggard Actual, as, after years of dreams, it appears to the wise. So runneth the speech of those who would erase, as with a sponge, all the idealism of the race as visionary and vain.

Over against this horror of great darkness rises the ancient faith of humanity, the secret alike of its heroism, its humility, and its hope. Older than the pyramids, newer

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

than the dawn, that faith is that God is somehow in our heavenly vision; our cloud of mystery, our pillar of fire; our never-failing light in the dark night of time. This faith, by which men live as seeing the invisible, is not a yielding but a power: the resolve, with the help of the Highest, to order the chaos of passion by the light and authority of the Ideal: the heroic insight which sees life as it is capable of becoming, and commits its fortunes to the effort to make real what it thus sees. In the early morning of time, while it was yet dark, man chose this high faith,

“And by the vision splendid,
Is on his way attended,”

led by a dynasty of shining souls, from Ikhna-ton in Egypt to Plato in Greece, from Moses in the wilderness to Him of whom we read in “the Book of white samite” where the sweet Voice sounds and the Visions dwell. Heart and flesh fail; and the generations come and go, following the forlorn march of dust. Yet that vision grows evermore, and abides, bringing out the colors of human life, and investing our fleeting mortal years with enduring significance and beauty. This is the eternal idealism in man: the Fact, as he sees it, behind the *maya* of material things; the Faith underlying all the religions of the world.

Whence came this high faith and vision? Admit that the moral ideal dawned in the

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

mind of man slowly, dimly, out of long racial and individual experience—a torch woven of fugitive rays of dream and desire, of hope and fear and shame. Have we then found the source of that light? Not yet. We have only traced the path along which man, led by a piercing ray, found a way out of the night of animalism into the dignity of the moral life. There remains the deeper question, the crux of the whole matter: did man at the beginning, and does he now, make his ideal? If so, whence the impulse to make it and where did he get his materials? From the world as externally observed? Why then is the conflict of that world with his ideals one of the oldest complaints and complexities of all thought? Did his ideal come from the soul itself standing in contrast to and defiance of the world? How then explain the awful disparity, so frequently confessed by the loftiest souls, between himself and his ideals? If man made his ideal, it would seem that he could unmake it, or at least control it. Yet every man knows that, so far from controlling his ideal, he is ruled by it, and can have no peace until he follows its Kindly Light.

No, man did not make his moral ideal, nor can he destroy it, though in hours of folly he would often gladly have done so. It was before we were; it is there whether we follow it or not; it will shine over our graves. As

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

with the voices that whisper within us, telling us those truths beyond the reach of words, by which we live, so it is here. Not Plato, not Dante, but Truth surviving all the incarnations of genius has kept that celestial ray aglow; they have but celebrated that which was never mortal, and guided distracted eyes to a "light that never was on sea or land." One need not hold by Plato and his Idea or Essence, from which comes our thought, and word, Ideal. Let it be admitted that he was too abstract, seeking in the shadowy caves of memory for what is revealed in the process of living, in the stress of moral struggle, in the strain of moral victory or defeat. Nevertheless, as respects the root of the matter, his bright and skyey insight was authentic, in that he found the key to life in the ideal, in—

"those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,
. . . the master light of all our seeing."

Following the ideal is indeed a mighty adventure, asking for heroism, fidelity, purity, and, above all, courage—the root of every virtue. Nor Lancelot nor Sir Galahad ever went on quest more daring. Two things must be practiced with the utmost vigilance if we are not to lose heart, tire of the quest, and slip away, imperceptibly it may be, from the high

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

demand. First, we must keep our minds open to the wonder and awe of the Ideal, which, if it be true to its name, points to the infinite, and is something greater than we have yet dreamed of. Second, we must renew our vows in the morning, and with the soul on its knees at eventide allow ourselves to be enlisted afresh in its pure service. Otherwise the vision will fade and grow dim, even in the act of applying it to the rough facts of life. In any event, there will be failures, subtle treacheries, sudden lapses, and bitter burnings of heart, but we must follow on. What if we fail at last, as fail we must if our ideal be high and true; what then? It has been nobly said:

“When we are young, if we are of an aspiring nature, we are apt to make much of our ideals. Then that kingdom which embraces in itself all ideals, if not entirely unreal, is yet thought of as remote. As life goes on the ideals which are yet before us, even if attained, dwindle and that kingdom grows. We come to feel that it is indeed the substance; these the shadows. Yet it is our ideals that make real to us that Kingdom of the Ideal which is all around us now, whether we recognize it or not. To surrender ourselves to it with all our lives may do something toward its advancement, and that so we become fellow workers, however humble, with the wise and good who have gone before us, and with Him who made them what they were.”

Ah, here is meat for the mind, food for the soul, and help for the brave who struggle for the light that never fails! Amidst whatever doubts and defeats, let us have faith in that

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

Kingdom of the Ideal which by our striving we may do somewhat to bring near. The idealist in time, however baffled and dismayed, has the aid of the Idealist in eternity who cannot fail. What though he fall by the way-side, and his very name be forgotten, he knows that in the long last the victory will be with the right, as ever the victory has been. Nor has he lived in vain. The first harps are broken and lost; dead the hands that struck them; but their art still lives and sings. Who were the first seekers after the Ideal? No one knows their names. Like us they were pilgrims, and had to pass into the Beyond; but they waked "those truths that perish never," and left a legacy of light! Across the years they hail us, citizens of that City which Plato saw, which Jesus bade us seek before all else, and which remains our refuge and our hope. This is not romance; it is the calm geometry of life.

But what if we fail through default, by treachery, by sin, and lose the glow of the Kindly Light? He that is no longer young may count himself happy if the vanished ideals of youth are not succeeded by the cynicisms of satiety, or, worse, by the rank infidelity of broken vows and desecrated shrines. Few men remain quite true to the heavenly vision, and "come smiling from the great world's snare—uncaught!" Time makes the same subtle

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

changes in our inner life of thought and character, as in our outward aspect. Every five years we find ourselves another, and yet the same—there is a change of views, and not less of the light in which we regard them; a change of motives as well as of actions. As men come in contact with the harshness of life, by infinitesimal yieldings, by minute cowardices, before they know it they have lost what is most worth keeping. Not many can bear the light of “the garish day.” Slowly, amidst the greyness of the actual, the vision fades and the wonder is withdrawn. Often a man is unaware of his loss, thinking that he has attained to wisdom, when in fact something fine has gone out of his life, leaving him wingless and alien to the sky. This is the great tragedy—that youth rules the world only when it is no longer young, and its ideals are damaged and dim. If our life-history be another story of *The Light that Failed*, what then? And this brings us to the last, haunting lines of the hymn of the Kindly Light.

III

Who were those Angel Faces who looked so kindly in the morning light, and whose smile the singer prayed to see once more? They were not his lost loved ones whom death had transfigured into angel shapes, as in the story the verses of the little girl were called poems after she had passed away. That was not

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

what Newman had in mind, though he would be the last to deny us such tender use of his words. It was not the dear, pitiful, august dead, much as we long to see them touched with immortal radiance, but the Guardian Angels of the soul, who "do always behold the face of my Father in heaven," of whom he sang. From earliest years he had believed that we come into the world not unattended, but in the keeping of a Guiding Spirit, whose face we see when we are young. Shadows fall and the face fades, but we may hear the sound of footsteps by our side in the loneliest paths of life. What he laments is not only the loss of those angel faces, but the loss, through wilful pride and planning, of their approving smile.

Of this reading there is no doubt at all for the student of the life of Newman. When he wrote these lines his friends were still around him in almost unbroken circle. Even Hurrell Froude, albeit smitten and doomed, was still alive. By "angel faces" he meant the faces of his guardian angels—a thought much with him at this time, as witness his poems, *Angelic Guidance* and *The Scars of Sin*, both written in 1832; and it remained with him to the end. Such was the interpretation of the hymn in the Hursley vicarage where Keble lived, and where Newman was so often a guest. It is made sure by a reading of *The Dream of Gerontius*, written in 1865, when, upon hearing of the death of a

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

friend, he followed in imagination the path of his friend into the unseen, and cast his musings into a poem which was at once an allegory and an act of faith.

So far Newman. What are the angel faces which *we* have loved long since and lost awhile? Let each one look deep into his own heart before he answers the question, watching the while, as Emerson bade us do, "that gleam of light which flashes across the mind from within, more than the luster of bards and sages." When we seek some high and pure ideal, following it through a multitude of plans for long years, over many obstacles, despite failures, are we seeking the ideal or is it seeking us? We push aside every substitute for it, seeking it in the books we read, in the friendships we form, in the labors we undergo, in the sorrows we endure—pressing through the crowd of things to touch the hem of its robe. Is it a call or an urge? An allurements, or an inward compulsion? Or is it both? What is it that thus impels us, while seeming only to invite us to be like itself?

If a man will look closely at his highest ideal, his holiest dream—that which he cannot help worshipping—he will find nothing to which it is more like than to Him who is "the lamp of poor souls" and the Light of the World. There is what Goodwin used to call "an instinct for Christ," in whom the moral ideal

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

takes a form full of grace and truth, touched with all the hues of human life, and in following whom the quest for personal worth becomes a personal fellowship. Once we know what it is astir within us, Who it is we are seeking, and by Whom we are so divinely drawn while blindly groping, the way is plain. How soon, alas, even the brightest ideals of early life fade, tarnished by the dust of years; but He, as was his way of old, renews the Heaven that "lies about us in our infancy," and our fairest dreams return. Even the hardest of us become, at His touch, as little children—"those little birds," as Dostoevsky loved to call them—and the morning faces smile. Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven; and with this renewal of our faded visions, this giving back of those long lost ideals, of which we hardly dare think, every other recovery seems possible and sure.

"Sins may be forgiven and visions may be given back. . . . It is in the things that come back that life takes on its finest glow and power. The purpose that is given back to us comes as a stronger purpose than the one with which we began, and by its return we learn how different a divine purpose is from the wavering and uncertain purpose which is made up wholly out of our own minds and wills. As graciously as the light is called kindly, this second advent of our highest hopes and ideals comes not mainly with condemnation for lost years, but as something which welcomes us back. . . . Full as it is of beauty and of thought, what makes the glory of the hymn, after all, is its quiet assumption

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

that at the end of discipline the soul shall have restored to it what it has lost."

What a Gospel for a world where so much fades into the Shadow, and where life is "a count of losses every year!" It is needed on this earth, if only to keep alive the souls of us, and to renew our faith in those dreams of beauty and of truth which we never quite forget, and never wholly remember save under its spell. It takes us down from our towering pride, and teaches us humility and sweet charity. Yea, it brings us back, after years of vanity and disloyalty, to a simplicity of faith in the things that grow not old, free from the shadow of Night and the fear of the Morrow—even such fear as fell upon the Bunyan pilgrim at the Dark River, lest he be drowned forever, and so never see the Face that he had come of many miles to see. And it gives such as have lost the heart of a little child hope that it will come back to them at last, sometime, somewhere—if not here, then out yonder with the dwellers of the City on the Hill.

What dreams were ours when life was new, what radiant idealism lighted up the future! We dreamed, and fancied ourselves immortal. We dreamed, and the old worn human way seemed a path of light shining more and more unto the Perfect Day. We dreamed, and the rosy gates of love, honor and power opened at our touch, and we entered with happy step.

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

We dreamed and dreamed and dreamed, and how often our dreams have come true only to confuse and baffle the awakening. And yet, except that too much dreaming may preclude the realities of to-morrow, where would the world be? What if our ideals change with the years, they are not illusions, much less delusions. It is the Ideal, though it never be reached, that lifts us from the dust and leads us to the skies.

“Is it a dream?

Nay but the lack of it the dream,

And failing it life's lore and wealth a dream,

And all the world a dream.”

There will “come a time, when it shall be light; and when a man shall awaken from his lofty dreams, and find his dreams still there, and that nothing has gone but his sleep!”

Thus evermore, now in forms lovely and gentle, now in shapes shrouded in awe, the mighty Ideal journeys before us. Fellow servitors of the Dream, let us follow the gleam to its source—the Light itself! When, at last, we shall look upon its glory we shall never again be afraid, nor regret aught we may have renounced to be true to our vision. For this dream of the Ideal is the light of God within us! Without it we perish! And He who made us what we are is in the grand pursuit—in the faith that makes it possible, in the struggle

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

that makes it noble, and still more in the
Kindly Light that guides it.

“Not of the sunlight,
Not of the moonlight,
Not of the starlight!
O young mariner,
Down to the haven,
Call your companions,
Launch your vessel,
And crowd your canvas,
And, ere it vanishes
Over the margin,
*After it, follow it,
Follow the Gleam!”*



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